

**Written Testimony of Janet Bellamy, of Ashford, CT  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee,  
March 7, 2011.**

Testimony in Support of:  
**Senate Bill 205, AN ACT REQUIRING THERMOSTAT MANUFACTURERS  
TO PAY INCENTIVES FOR THE RETURN OF MERCURY THERMOSTATS**

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and honorable members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Janet Bellamy *I am a resident of Ashford, CT and I work as an Occupational Therapist with children and adults in Woodstock CT.*

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support of SB 205, a bill that would require thermostat manufacturers to pay a \$5 incentive for the return of mercury thermostats.

Mercury is a known neurotoxin damaging children's developing nervous systems. Even a small quantity is enough to contaminate a large lake, risk public health and negatively affect the environment. Knowing this, Connecticut has already banned the sale of thermostats that contain mercury. However, it is estimated that remaining thermostats in Connecticut homes contain thousands of pounds of mercury. When these old thermostats are replaced it is vital that they be safely collected and recycled – a financial incentive will help to ensure that the mercury is handled properly.

In 2002, Connecticut passed a comprehensive mercury products bill which phased out the sale of mercury-containing products. Products containing greater than one gram of mercury (including thermostats) were banned for sale after July 1, 2004.

Thermostats represent the largest amount of mercury in household products, and—unless the necessary steps are taken—will remain a significant source of mercury in the municipal waste stream and continue to contaminate New England's environment.

- Even in small quantities, mercury can cause significant health and ecological problems.
- Exposure to methylmercury (the form of mercury that bioaccumulates in fish) can cause severe damage to the functioning and development of the

central nervous system, and is particularly harmful for fetuses and young children.

There is a significant reservoir of mercury in thermostats which will eventually be released into the environment—through building fires, demolition, and disposal — unless states adopt policies that require new thermostats to be mercury free, ban the disposal of mercury thermostats into landfills or incinerators, and mandate collection and recycling programs.

Thank you,

Janet Bellamy  
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